

House Committee on Business and Labor  
HB 2358  
Letter in Opposition

I can't express my opposition to HB2358 in strong enough terms. I would like to tell you about how it will place a financial burden on my business, how it will be difficult to manage in an industry dominated by the weather, or about how much of a competitive disadvantage it is for producers in Oregon. However, I have come to realize that you don't care about any of those things so instead I would like to tell you how this bill's passage will affect one of my employees.

I recently hired an employee who was coming back to agriculture after being away for five years. When he left my business in 2016 he went in to construction. In order to earn the most money he and his new bride along with their ever growing family lived in Washington, California, and finally Nevada following the work in pursuit of good wages. I believe from my conversations with him that the money was good which leads to a logical question why would he want to return to agriculture an industry with a reputation for long hours and low pay. The answer involved a number of factors that he and his wife mentioned as we discussed his return to my operation but the one I find most relevant to HB 2358 was his commute in Nevada which was 1 to 1<sup>1/2</sup> hours each day in both directions. Simply put he was away from his family an additional three each day, time for which he was not being compensated. At his new job, in agriculture, his commute is 3-5 minutes and he can go home for lunch every day in the off season. His new position does require a lot of hours during certain times of the year but at least all the time he spends away from his family will be compensated.

Agriculture is not the low wage industry many people believe it to be. This young man is currently making \$30 per hour, without a college degree. He has the opportunity to work a lot of hours as a result he and his family can live a middle class lifestyle with dreams of finding and buying a home. If HB2358 passes I won't be able to absorb the additional cost associated with overtime consequently I will be forced to limit this employees hours. In all honesty I don't think he will be able to afford a middle class life any more. I suspect he will return to construction and long hours on the road, moving his family from one job to the next.

Good employees are difficult to find and tougher to keep than at any other time since I have been in business as a result they are well paid. Quite honestly they have the power I don't understand why the government would want to take away their options and limit the earning potential. It is difficult for people to understand but for many in the resource economy long productive work hours are what we crave. Why should the government limit an employee's choice and ambition? Who really benefits from the change HB2358 imposes, it won't be anyone working for me. I can't afford to pay overtime and I will figure out how to run my business without it, leaving young ambitious people wondering why they now have to work two jobs instead of one.

Sincerely

John Frisch  
Agriculture Producer

